

Interview H0081: with Thubten Wangbo [tib. thub bstan dbang po], (China, 8 July 1992) : Part No. 2 of 2

Thubten Wangbo was a monk official in the Tibetan government who went to Beijing in 1953 on a tour and remained there entering the Central Nationalities Institute, where he taught Tibetan for decades. He talks about his returning from Beijing to Lhasa in 1957-58 together with his Chinese students in order to give them language practice in Tibetan, and about the monk official Jedrung Bashi and the monk official underground group in Beijing.

Q

Last time, I got an article from Dharamsala written by Bashi Jedrung [tib. bar gzhis rje drung] who was the [Tsendrön](#). Is he still alive?

A

I don't know because they are over there [India].

Q

There were two Bashi with the same name, is that correct?

A

I swear by the Jo Rinpoche [tib. jo [bo](#) rin po che] that I don't have any idea about this. I didn't have much time to stay and become a monk official because in 1951 Tibet was liberated and I went to China in 1953.

Q

Bashi Jedrung also probably went to Beijing, right?

A

He didn't go to school and study like we did. I know about this. Ngawang Thöndrub [tib. ngag dbang don grub] and those people went to China, but he didn't go.

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Q

He said that he joined an organization of [tsidrun](#) in 1958 and Ngawang Thöndrub was also there. There was a person called Bartsho [tib. bar mtsho].

A

I don't know him.

Q

He told me that they set up a small group [tib. tshogs chung] for opposing the Central Government. Most of the members of that team were [tsidrun](#) who went to study in China, but after a while they didn't like the Central Government and came back to Lhasa.

A

There was a person called Bashi Jedrung, but he had never been to China. Ngawang Senge [tib. ngag dbang seng ge] and Ngawang Thöndrub went together to China voluntarily in 1951. When I went to China, the Central Committee organized a Youth Tour Group. After the tour, I didn't come back and stayed there and studied. I heard that Ngawang Senge was killed in the revolt somewhere. Ngawang Thöndrub is still alive in Dharamsala. Bashi Jedrung was not among the people who studied in China.

Q

He said that when the [tsidrun](#) were in China, they kind of opposed [the Chinese] a little bit.

A

I heard about that, but I was not involved. Probably, it was in 1957-1958 when they kind of opposed a little bit because in 1957 the rightist [tib. g.yas phyogs pa] [campaign] occurred and at that time they were in China. I was not in China in 1957. I brought my the students and came to Lhasa for their practical language training [tib. dngos sbyong]. At that time there wasn't any place to practice in the countryside because democratic reforms had not been done yet. We came to investigate language in Metrogongkar [tib. mal gro [gung](#) dkar] and [Chushur](#).

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Q

Was the trouble [in Beijing] about ethnicity or what?

A

I wasn't there at that time. I heard that they were saying that it was the local nationalism [tib. sa gnas mi rigs ring lugs] and that they were talking about nationalism.

Q

The two of them were involved in that, right?

A

Yes, they were definitely involved. Ngawang Senge had already come back [to Tibet] before that. Probably Ngawang Thöndrub was there at that time.

Q

Were there any other [tsidrung](#) involved in that? He said that there were quite a lot of people involved in that.

A

Bashi Jedrung didn't go to China.

Q

It is strange. When I read his article, I thought that he went to China.

A

Probably, he went for a visit/tour [tib. Ita skor]. I know that he never studied and taught in the Central Nationalities Institute.

Q

Were there any other young [tsidrung](#)?

A

Probably not. Anyway, it was long time ago. 40 years ago.

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It was said that there were some [tsidrung](#) involved in local nationalism. When the rightists came out, the Tibetans also did something. I was not there at that time. Ngawang Thöndrub was definitely involved in that.

Q

I learned about that just before I left. He wrote in his article that he was a kind of an important person and they made a secret underground group [tib. sa 'og tshogs chung] and they had a lot of involvement with the events of 1959 and they delivered the messages to the people. Were you in Tibet in 1958?

A

Yes. At the end of 1958 I was teaching language in the Lhasa Middle School [ch. la zhong.] I went back to China before the revolt took place in 1959.

Q

Do you remember anything about hearing that there were three kinds of meetings held in 1958? The main problem was the Khambas of [Chushigandru](#). The PRC said that the Tibetan Government should handle this and in the Kashag, Ngabö said that we should handle this. But Shasur [tib. bshad zur] and Liushar [tib. sne'u shar] implied that we can't handle this. Some people said that an Intermediate Assembly [tib. hrag bdus rgyas pa] was held regarding the Khambas and the leader [tib. gtso 'dzin] of the meeting was [Kalön](#) Surkhang. It was an extraordinary meeting.

Q

Some other people said that Ngabö held a meeting of the Reform Office [tib. legs bcos las khungs] regarding the Khambas and the leader was Ngabö and all the government officials attended the meeting.

Q

Some other people said that another meeting was held which was not regarding ending the Khamba's [disturbances], but it was regarding the Dalai Lama going abroad. I heard these were all done in 1958. Were all of the meetings held separately or it was the same meeting. Do you know about this?

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A

I have never heard about this.

Q

Really?

A

I just came from China and I was practicing language. So we ourselves had to be very careful at that time. To tell you the truth, we had already gone on the path of the Communist Party. We were being careful not to have one's life get harmed. Therefore, we never meddled into those things or inquired about it and I didn't hear anything about that.

At that time, the (Tibetan) soldiers and monks were saying that we were working for the Chinese and getting salary from the Chinese, so we were just keeping quiet. If I was working in the Local Government, I might know something about this. I was already separated from that.

At that time, our duty was to investigate the language. There was another group investigating the society [ch. she hui diao cha]. Sometimes we had to help them. Their duty was to prepare [information] for the democratic reforms to be implemented in 1956.

At that time, when we went to [Chushur](#), on the one hand we investigated the language and on the other hand, we investigated how many big households and middle households there were. When we were going back and forth, we took guns and we were very careful. My colleagues were all Chinese students.

At that time, outwardly, people were saying the Khambas are opposing us and doing this and that. Actually, the Local Government was acting behind them. We just heard that meetings were held because I was living in Lhasa. But, in general, I didn't know what kind of meetings were held and how many times they held and how many people attended the meetings.

Q

Nowadays, how many [tsidrun](#) are there in Lhasa and in Beijing?

A

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There are some [tsidrung](#) in the Political Consultative Conference [tib. chab srid gros tshogs] of Lhasa Municipality who were released from the jail like [Gyambumgang](#) [tib. rje 'bum sgang] [Tsendrön](#) Gyentsen Tempel [tib. rgyal mtshan bstan 'phel]. He joined the revolt, was imprisoned and released. I met him on the road and he had changed a lot because we hadn't met for 40 years. People told me that he was that person. If you asked him, there might be some other [tsidrung](#) also. I heard that there were some others. Bumthang [tib. 'bum thang] [Tsendrön](#) Gyentsen Phüntso [tib. rgyal mtshan phun tshogs] was with Ngabö when they signed the 17-Point Agreement. He is the Chairman [ch. zhu xi] of the Political Consultative Conference. He might also know some other [tsidrung](#).

Q

He might not know the secret things, right?

A

Yes. He and [Shölkhang](#) Jetrung [tib. zhol khang rje drung] and young people like us were the real revolutionaries [tib. gsar brje] [pro-communist] and people used to feel suspicious of us. Nowadays, we are called the progressives [tib. yar thon]. If there were some people who had attended those meetings and were imprisoned and released, they will tell you about those things and say that what they did was wrong. There isn't any problem for them to say that.